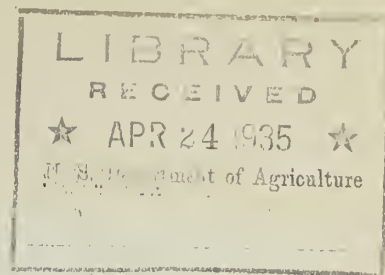


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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

The Spring and Vegetable Market

A radio interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Wells A. Sherman, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, broadcast Thursday, April 18, 1935, in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, by NBC and a network of 50 associate radio stations.

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MR. SALISBURY: Here again is Miss Van Deman, ready to give one of her timely talks to homemakers. And I see she has a guest with her.

Miss Van Deman, I'll give you the pleasure of presenting your co-star on this program.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Not the co-star, but the star on this program, Mr. Salisbury. Certainly, it is a pleasure, always, to present Mr. Wells A. Sherman. Not that an old friend like Mr. Sherman needs any introduction to a Farm and Home Hour audience.

Mr. Sherman, it was more than a month ago I think that you gave us the news on the fruit and vegetable market. The cold weather in Florida and Texas played some mighty mean tricks on the tender green things a-growing down there, you told us I remember.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, southern vegetables are still feeling the effects of those winter freezes. Take cabbage for example. The lowly cabbage head has climbed to dizzy heights. The prudent northern growers generally have their winter cabbage all sold out by this time. And they've done that this year just as usual, but at higher prices. Ordinarily at the middle of April we'd still be getting big supplies of fresh green cabbage from Texas and Florida to take the place of the northern winter stock. But the freeze in Florida in December and then in Texas in January killed the young cabbage plants down to the ground.

MISS VAN DEMAN: There's some cabbage in the market, though, Mr. Sherman. Where's that coming from?

MR. SHERMAN: Still some from Texas and Florida but largely from South Carolina, or maybe from the region around Mobile Bay in Alabama. A little later Mississippi will begin shipping in earnest, and so will North Carolina.

MISS VAN DEMAN: And then I suppose friend cabbage will drop back where it belongs, among the plebeian low-priced vegetables.

MR. SHERMAN: That's what we expect.

(over)

MISS VAN DEMAN: Are onions having a temporary inflation too? Seems to me they're all out of proportion to their usual price at this time of year.

MR. SHERMAN: They certainly are. They seem to think we are back in the war. That's another result of the freeze last January. The Texas onions were badly nipped. So the crop is short and what there is of it is late. Old onions are selling for 9 and 10 cents a pound.

MISS VAN DEMAN: What about Bermuda onions, those flat mild ones that some of us like to slice for onion sandwiches for spring picnics. Can't we import Bermuda onions to help us out?

MR. SHERMAN: We do import the whole Bermuda crop but it isn't a drop in the bucket for us. You know the Texas onions are of the Bermuda type, and we get the seed not from Bermuda but from the Canary Islands. We are getting some foreign onions this spring from Egypt. In ordinary times the tariff would be prohibitive, but a market like this stimulates foreign trade.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Those are well-traveled onions I should say. Next thing you'll be telling us that Australia is sending us strawberries.

MR. SHERMAN: No, but I did hear of something almost as odd. A shipment of cabbage arrived from Antwerp, Belgium, not long ago.

MISS VAN DEMAN: This certainly is a topsy-turvy world with cabbage and onions in the luxury class and coming to us on trans-Atlantic ships. Well, what about the strawberry crop? Can we have strawberry sauce on our ice cream on Easter Sunday?

MR. SHERMAN: Maybe so. That depends on a number of things, including how much you care to spend for a pint of strawberries.

MISS VAN DEMAN: They're not in the cheap and plentiful class then?

MR. SHERMAN: No. Strawberries are cheap-er, or perhaps I should say less expensive than they were a while back. And they are more plentiful, but for the country as a whole I doubt whether the strawberry crop is going to be what it was last year.

MISS VAN DEMAN: More effects of cold weather?

MR. SHERMAN: Cold weather this winter and drought last summer that kept the old beds from sending out runners and renewing themselves as they generally do.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Where are most of the strawberries coming from now?

MR. SHERMAN: Here in the East we're getting strawberries from North Carolina and Louisiana. Out in the Middle West all the berries now are probably from Louisiana. Later they'll be from Arkansas and Tennessee. Southern and Middle-western berries travel north and east, but eastern berries seldom go west.

MISS VAN DEMAN: The story is somewhat the same with asparagus, isn't it?

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, very much. California sends asparagus all the way across the continent, but we use all of our eastern asparagus right here in the east.

MISS VAN DEMAN: I noticed a South Carolina name the other day on a crate of asparagus here in Washington.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes. South Carolina grows a lot of very fine asparagus for shipping fresh. California is the place where most of the asparagus is canned.

MISS VAN DEMAN: I suppose asparagus is bound to stay one of the higher priced vegetables.

MR. SHERMAN: It will unless the asparagus plant changes its way of living. An asparagus patch, even more than an orchard, has the ground all to itself all the year around and for years at a time. But asparagus is a spring crop, with a harvest season of six weeks at the best. That makes it an expensive crop to grow as compared with snap beans for instance. As soon as one crop is harvested, you can plow under the old vines, and plant more beans or some other crop. But it's not so with asparagus.

MISS VAN DEMAN: That's something we consumers forget to figure into the price of a bunch of asparagus. We might call it, not the overhead, but the underground expense of asparagus.

MR. SHERMAN: Underground is right, if you've ever seen the root system of an asparagus plant.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, it just so happens that I have. I tried to dig up an asparagus plant once. Thank you, Mr. Sherman, for coming over today. I hope you'll come again when spring is a little further advanced, and bring us up to date again.

And goodbye, everybody, and I hope you'll have a very happy Easter.

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